

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12

DPW-01 AID-20 RSR-01 /115 W
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R 081100 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9823

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DANANG

NHA TRANG

BIEN HOA

CAN THO

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EO 11652 N/ A

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE MEDIA REACTION TO PRESIDENT THIEU' S US VISIT

REFS: A. SAIGON 5649 B. SAIGON 5823

1. SUMMARY. VIETNAMESE MEDIA HAVE GIVEN HEAVY COVERAGE TO PRESIDENT THIEU' S US TRIP. EDITORIAL COVERAGE HAS BEEN FAVORABLE WITH VIRTUALLY ALL NEWSPAPERS VIEWING THIEU AS SUCCESSFULLY CARRYING OUT A MISSION VITAL TO THE RVN' S FUTURE. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRESIDENT' S TRIP IS ADDITIONALLY HIGHLIGHTED BY THE SOMBRE NEWS FROM THE KHMER REPUBLIC AND CONTINUED FIGHTING IN VIET- NAM. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT THIEU' S TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES HAS RECEIVED WIDE AND CONTINUING COVERAGE IN VIETNAMESE NEWS MEDIA. ALL SAIGON NEWSPAPERS HAVE GIVEN FRONT- PAGE TREATMENT TO THE PRESIDENT' S MISSION,
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WITH ADMINISTRATION- CONTROLLED DAILIES NOT UNEXPECTEDLY BEING MOST LAVISH WITH THEIR SPACE. DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF VIETNAMESE NEWS- MEN IN THE US, THE BULK OF THE COVERAGE HAS BEEN MATERIAL RE- PRINTED OR DERIVED FROM FOREIGN WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS.

3. GVN RADIO AND TELEVISION HAVE AFFORDED HEAVY COVERAGE TO ALL FACETS OF THE TRIP IN NEWSCASTS AND FEATURES. THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS COMMENTARIES FOCUSING ON SUCH THINGS AS THE US- GVN JOINT COMMUNIQUE AND FAVORABLE EDITORIAL OPINION IN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS IN ADDITION TO EXTRACTS FROM THE SAIGON PRESS. TELEVISED SLOGANS DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS HAVE INCLUDED: " LONG LIVE VIETNAMESE

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AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP" AND " HAVING BEEN ALLIES IN WAR, THE RVN AND USA WILL COOPERATE CLOSELY IN PEACE".

4. COVERAGE OF THE THIEU TRIP HAS NOT BEEN IN ISOLATION FROM THE LATEST INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS. A NUMBER OF PAPERS GIVE PROMINENCE TO THE PRESIDENT' S REMARKS TO THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB. TRANG DEN (APR 8) HEADLINES: " PRESIDENT THIEU: IF THE COMMUNISTS SEIZE PHNOM PENH WAR WILL RAGE THROUGHOUT INDOCHINA". PICTURES OF BOMB- LADEN F-111' S TAKING OFF FOR CAMBODIAN AIRSTRIKES ARE FRONT- PAGED IN MANY PAERS. THE CONTINUED FIGHTING IN VIET- NAM, PARTICULARLY AT TONG LE CHAN AND HONG NGU, IS ALSO FEATURED AND COMMENTED ON IN EDITORIALS ABOUT THE THIEU TRIP.

5. THE GENERAL IMPRESSION A READER WOULD DRAW FROM MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE RVN PRESIDENT' S TRIP TO THE US IS THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF US- GVN RELATIONS THE VISIT HAS BEEN A SUCCESS. FOR EXAMPLE, SOUTHERN AND GENERALLY OPPOSITIONIST THOI DAI MIEN NAM EDITORIZLIZES THAT THIEU HAS BEEN " SUCCESSFUL" REGARDING THE MAJOR PROBLEMS HE WENT TO THE US TO DISCUSS. THE PAPER ASSERTS THAT PRESIDENT THIEU " WANTS GUARANTEES IN BLACK AND WHITE" AGAINST COMMUNIST INVASION" AND CLAIMS THAT THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE IS THE RESULT OF THIEU' S DEMAND AND THAT " PRESIDENT NIXON HAS NOT TRIED TO AVOID HIS RESPONSIBILITY". ALSO COMMENTING ON THE COMMUNIQUE, INDEPENDENT DOC LAP EXPRESSES HOPE THAT AFTER THIEU' S US VISIT " THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH VIET NAM WILL BECOME CLEARER AND NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES, QUICKER SO PEACE CAN BE RESTORED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE". ACCORDING TO INDEPENDENT DAN QUYEN, THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT IN THE COMMUNIQUE IS THAT THE TWO LEADERS AGREED THAT " ANY ACTION THREATENING THE CEASEFIRE WILL REQUIRE STRONG AND APPROPRIATE RE- ACTION". THE ADMINISTRATION' S TIN SONG IS MORE EXPLICIT ABOUT THE CONCERN OF THE TWO PRESIDENTS ABOUT COMMUNIST CEASEFIRE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VIOLATIONS AND ASSERTS: " HANOI SHOULD CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THIS WARNING".

6. THE MOST RECENT ISSUES OF LOCAL PAPERS HAVE FOCUSED ON THE WASHINGTON PORTION OF THE THIEU TRIP AND HIS DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS. PAPERS GENERALLY REPORT A FAVORABLE OUTCOME OF THESE TALKS. TIN SONG, BASING ITS ACCOUNT ON " US DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES", HEADLINES THAT " US CONGRESS WILL AGREE TO CONTINUE AID TO THE RVN. RVN ASKS US TO INCREASE AID TO \$500 MILLION PER YEAR THROUGH 1973". ADJACENT TO FAVORABLE STORIES OF THIS SORT, SEVERAL APR 8 PAPERS HAVE RUN WIRE SERVICE STORIES ASSERTING THAT THE US HAS DECIDED TO DROP ITS PROGRAM OF PROVIDING THE DRV WITH RECONSTRUCTION AID.

7. COMMENT: THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITIONIST ACTIVITY OF RECENT DAYS HAS BEEN THE DELIVERY TO THE EMBASSY OF TELEGRAMS FOR PRESIDENT NIXON AND THE US CONGRESS SIGNED BY 38 OPPOSITIONIST LEGISLATORS AND SEVERAL OTHERS (REFS A AND B). THESE MESSAGES RECEIVED SCANT ATTENTION IN THE LOCAL PRESS. END COMMENT.

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON05887
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730438/aaaahzxn.tel
Line Count: 141
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A.SAIGON 5649 B. SAIGON 5823
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15-Aug-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <28-Nov-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971215
Subject: VIETNAMESE MEDIA REACTION TO PRESIDENT THIEU' S US VISIT
TAGS: PINT, VS, PINT
To: BANGKOK
CINCPAC
DANANG
EA
JEC PARIS
NHA TRANG
PHNOM PENH

SECSTATE WASHDC
VIENTIANE

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005